

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel originally filed Claims 1-21.

Please enter the following Claims:

~~29.~~ (new) A ferrule comprising:

a ferrule body extending lengthwise between opposed front and rear faces to thereby define a longitudinal axis, the ferrule body defining a lengthwise extending bore capable of receiving an end portion of an optical fiber, wherein the front face of the ferrule body includes a ground portion and an unground portion, wherein the bore opens through the ground portion.

Rule 1.18 ~~30.~~ (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~29.~~, further comprising a chamfer adjacent to the front face.

~~31.~~ (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~29.~~, wherein the ground portion is rearward of the unground portion.

~~32.~~ (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~29.~~, wherein the unground portion is a plateau.

~~33.~~ (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~29.~~, wherein a plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

~~34.~~ (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~33.~~, wherein the plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle of between about 8° and about 12° relative to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

~~35.~~ (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~29.~~, wherein the unground portion extends across less than 50% of the front face of the ferrule body.

29 36. (new) The ferrule according to claim 29, wherein said ferrule body includes a chamber and the unground portion is disposed proximate to the chamber of the ferrule body.

30 37. (new) A ferrule comprising:

a ferrule body extending lengthwise between opposed front and rear faces, the ferrule body having a lengthwise extending bore defining a longitudinal axis, the bore capable of receiving an end portion of an optical fiber, wherein the front face of the ferrule body includes a compound surface having a ground portion and an unground portion, the ground portion having a hemispherical portion through which the bore opens.

31 38. (new) The ferrule according to claim 37, further comprising a chamfer adjacent to the front face.

32 39. (new) The ferrule according to claim 37, wherein the unground portion is rearward of the ground portion.

33 40. (new) The ferrule according to claim 37, wherein a plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

34 41. (new) The ferrule according to claim 40, wherein the plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle of between 8° and 12° relative to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

35 42. (new) The ferrule according to claim 37, wherein the unground portion extends across less than 50% of the front face of the ferrule body.

~~38~~ 43. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~37~~³⁰, wherein the ferrule body includes a chamfer and the unground portion is disposed proximate the chamfer of the ferrule body.

~~37~~ 44. (new) A ferrule comprising:

a ferrule body extending lengthwise between opposed front and rear faces to thereby define a longitudinal axis wherein the ferrule body defines a lengthwise extending bore capable of receiving an end portion of an optical fiber and a chamfer, the chamfer being adjacent to the front face, and the front face of the ferrule body includes a ground portion and an unground portion, wherein the bore opens through the ground portion.

~~38~~ 45. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~44~~³⁷, wherein the ground portion is rearward of the unground portion.

~~39~~ 46. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~44~~³⁷, wherein the unground portion is a plateau.

~~40~~ 47. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~44~~³⁷, wherein a plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

~~41~~ 48. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~47~~⁴⁰, wherein the plane coincident with the bore is disposed at an offset angle of between about 8° and about 12° relative to the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal axis.

~~42~~ 49. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~44~~³⁷, wherein the unground portion extends across less than 50% of the front face of the ferrule body.

~~43~~ 50. (new) The ferrule according to claim ~~44~~³⁷, wherein said ferrule body includes a chamber and the unground portion is disposed proximate to the chamber of the ferrule body.